

## Office of Professional Accountability (OPA)

### Commendations & Complaints Report

### December 2003

#### Commendations:

Commendations Received in December: 70

Commendations Received to Date: 861

Rank	Summary
(1) Detective	Congratulations were received for a multi-agency task force detective who tenaciously pursued suspects. He received kudos for his professionalism and ability to obtain self-incriminating statements from the suspects after their arrest. Thanks for a great job!
(2) Officers	Two officers were professional in their out-standing presentation to "at risk high school students" regarding careers in law enforcement. The officers added great warmth and humor to a difficult job.
(1) Parking Enforcement Officer	A parking enforcement officer's keen awareness, observation, dedication to duty and teamwork led to a successful arrest.
(3) Communications Dispatchers	Three dispatchers were superb in their calm demeanor and negotiations regarding a disturbed subject. Their actions ultimately led to a peaceful conclusion. Hostage negotiators responded and elected to allow the dispatchers to take the incident to its conclusion. Great job!
(1) Civilian	A section manger at the city attorney's office complimented a civilian employee on the terrific job and quick responses to their requests on rush cases.
(1) Communication Dispatcher	A dispatcher was able to quickly assess a situation regarding an out-of-state caller and assisted in resolving a tragic event. The dispatcher was knowledgeable and professional while handling the call.
(1) Detective	A letter of commendation was received for a detective that was assigned a harassment case involving a citizen. The detective was caring, insightful and worked hard to come to a just conclusion.
(1) Detective	A detective excelled in handling a robbery investigation case. Most of the stolen items were recovered and returned. The detective was professional, courteous, efficient and effective.
(1) Lieutenant	Accolades were received for a lieutenant who demonstrated exceptional work ethics. His professionalism illustrated an effective and productive method of addressing violent crime matters.
(1) Officer	Kudos to an officer that illustrated kindness and a willingness to extend himself and find solutions to assist citizens with problems. His actions have not gone unnoticed.
(1) Sergeant (1) Officer	Two representatives of the police department responded to a citizen regarding a sensitive nature. The sergeant and officer were professional and compassionate during the interview. The situation was resolved and the sergeant and officer deserved recognition.
(1) Officer	An officer was gracious and encouraged a civilian to consider testing for a police officer position. The officer encouraged a ride-along and discussed the protocol to become an officer.
(1) Officer	An officer responded to a 911 call regarding drug activity near a business. The officer was professional and his devotion to duty allowed for making the area a safer place to work.
(1) Officer	A Seattle officer was commended in the participation and apprehension of a suspect. The family truly appreciated the dedicated officer's actions.

(3) Officers	Three officers responded to a burglar alarm when an individual broke into a home. The officers contained the damage to one area and did their best to provide temporary coverage. Their actions demonstrated that they went above and beyond the call of duty. Thanks for the outstanding service.
(1) Captain (1) Sergeant (2) Officers (1) Civilian	A neighboring community's heartfelt thanks were extended to the Seattle Police Department employees. Their dedicated professionalism was shown and demonstrated the highest standards of responsible police work.
(6) Officers	Six officers responded to an unruly individual that acted violently and screamed inappropriately. The officer's communication with each other was excellent and their assistance the entire time ensured proper tactics. Safety was a priority.
(1) Officer	An officer from a local precinct was extremely polite and thoughtful to a citizen involving a car prowler that had recently taken place. A thank you from an individual that found comfort knowing there are officers out there that do protect the public.
Many Officers	The North Precinct continues to build relationships of trust among street youth. The officers met with representatives and local service providers on how to make a difference. Thanks for the resources and the dedicated officers.
(1) Officer	A community group expressed their gratitude for the knowledgeable presentation made by an officer. He discussed issues pertaining to safety, crime, drugs and self-protection.
(1) Bicycle Patrol Sergeant	A bicycle patrol sergeant made a difference in our community. He demonstrated his strong commitment to the safety of the area and created solutions to on-going problematic situations.
(2) K-9 Officers	Two K-9 officers responded to several emergency calls from another local law-enforcement agency. One caller required assistance in a burglary-in-progress, and the second call was a vehicle theft, where two suspects were apprehended and arrested. The officer's willingness to help another agency was greatly appreciated.
(8) Officers	An appreciation letter was received, for eight officers for their gracious assistance in allowing eight out-of-state law enforcement college students to participate in ride-a-longs.
(2) Detective	The Governor's office sent an appreciation letter for the efforts of two detectives in locating and arresting a perpetrator of a high-profile crime.
(1) Officer	Kudos for an officer that was extremely polite and efficient when he responded to the theft and use of a bankcard.
(6) Officers (2) Dispatchers	An electronic tracking system company praised six officers and two dispatchers in making a rapid arrest of a bank robber and full recovery of stolen money. All involved were able to effectively utilize their professional training in an exemplary manner.
(1) Captain (1) Lieutenant	A local law-enforcement department sent commendations for two officers that assisted in security when the President of the United States attended a fundraising event at a private residence. The officer's demonstrated their professionalism and dedication to duty. Their knowledge and operational expertise was the ultimate success in the area of crowd management.
(1) Detective	The Washington Attorney General's office commended a detective for his assistance while working on a high profile murder case that was recently solved. Thank you for your service and hard work.
(3) Detectives (4) Officers	Pursuit and arrests of three suspects in a bank robbery resulted from outstanding work done by all that responded. Their superior quick thinking and actions have resulted in three very dangerous felons being removed from the streets without serious injury to officers or citizens.
(1) Officer	An officer volunteered his time to entertain employees and board members of a non-profit organization at their recent holiday lunch. The officer's upbeat and lively entertainment livened up everyone's spirits.

(1) Officer	An officer assisted an out of town visitor whose luggage was stolen from a vehicle. The officer's professional and courteous attitude made a bad situation much better.
(1) Officer	An officer received a thank you letter from a citizen that participated in a ride-a-long. The information received while on a ride-a-long had an extreme impact on the responsibilities, required education and knowledge one must obtain for a police officer's job.
(1) Officer	An outstanding officer deserved recognition for his continued superb work. The officer assisted two local law-enforcement agencies in solving numerous unsolved robberies and the suspect is facing a life sentence.

## December 2003 Closed Cases:

*Cases involving alleged misconduct of officers and employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.*

*Cases are reported by allegation type. One case may be reported under more than one category.*

### UNNECESSARY FORCE

Synopsis	Action Taken
It was alleged that during a protest, the named officer threw the subject to the ground and that this constituted unnecessary force.	The named officer stated that while officers were placing the subject's relative under arrest, the subject rushed toward the officers. In an effort to stop the subject, the officer reached out and grabbed the subject's shoulder, causing them both to spin around and fall. A videotape and photograph support this explanation. No other force was used by the named officer. Finding – EXONERATED. In addition, following review of this file, policy recommendations regarding report-writing were forwarded by the OPA to the Chief of Police.
Complainant alleged unnecessary force in his arrest following a disturbance.	The evidence produced in the investigation did not support the allegations and damaged the subject's credibility. Four civilian witnesses stated that the complainant was not mistreated. Finding – UNFOUNDED. The complainant also alleged an inappropriate remark was made about his arrest. Based on the poor credibility of the complainant, this allegation was likewise UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged that while he was walking away from a collision involving his vehicle, the named officers used unnecessary force.	The evidence indicates that the subject ran from officers, which diminished his credibility in the investigation. The officers gave consistent and reasonable explanations of the arrest. Minimal force was used to place the subject under arrest. Finding – UNFOUNDED. The complainant also alleged that personal property was improperly secured in his van. This allegation was converted to a Supervisory Referral (SR) so the policy can be reviewed with the officer and the handling of personal property improved.

### FAILURE TO TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION

Synopsis	Action Taken
The complainant alleged that the named employee, while on duty	Investigation showed that the named employee struck a parked vehicle, causing minimal damage. The employee

and operating a marked patrol car, struck a parked vehicle. The named employee allegedly made an offer to compensate the owner for damages.	paid for the damage to the vehicle. The evidence indicates that the employee violated Department policy by not documenting and reporting the accident to a supervisor. Finding – SUSTAINED for Failure to Take Appropriate Action; NOT SUSTAINED for Conduct Unbecoming an Officer.
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### CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged named employees kicked his door and made unprofessional remarks.	Based on the line's preliminary investigation and extensive knowledge with the complainant, the evidence establishes that the incident did not happen as described. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged the named officer was rude while conducting traffic control at an intersection. Complainant also alleged the officer failed to identify herself when requested to do so.	Evidence showed officer was professional in dealing with an obviously angry and frustrated citizen. Finding – UNFOUNDED. As to failure to I.D., the officer did provide her serial number. This was sufficient to identify the officer. Further information would have been difficult as the officer was in the middle of an intersection directing traffic with thousands of protesters in the street. Finding – Converted to Supervisory Referral (SR).
Complainant alleged she was the focus of excessive attention and inappropriate remarks by a police officer on University Avenue.	The investigation showed the allegations were without merit. The complainant was uncooperative, gave conflicting accounts, and showed she was not credible. The named officer and witness officers provided credible, consistent statements regarding all contacts with the complainant. Finding – UNFOUNDED.

### IMPROPER SEARCH

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged the named employee conducted an improper search and made derogatory comments to the subject during a narcotics investigation.	Complaint was immediately responded to, documented, and assigned for investigation. However, no evidence supported the allegation, the complainant's allegation changed with each telling, all involved officers deny the allegation, and the allegation defies common sense. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED.

**Definitions of Findings:**

**“Sustained”** means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

**“Not sustained”** means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

**“Unfounded”** means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

**“Exonerated”** means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

**Referred for Supervisory Resolution.**

**Training or Policy Recommendation** means that there has been no willful violation but that there may be deficient policies or inadequate training that need to be addressed.

**“Administratively Unfounded/Exonerated”** is a discretionary finding which may be made prior to the completion that the complaint was determined to be significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit, i.e., complaint is false or subject recants allegations, preliminary investigation reveals mistaken/wrongful employee identification, etc, or the employee's actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.

**“Administratively Inactivated”** means that the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence. Inactivated cases will be included in statistics but may not be summarized in this report if publication may jeopardize a subsequent investigation.

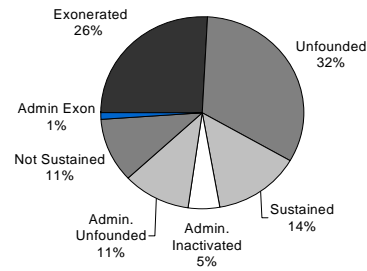
## Status of OPA Contacts to Date:

### 2002 Contacts

	December 2002	Jan. - Dec. 2002
Contact Logs	50	573
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	11	104
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS; LI)	17	201
Cases Closed	2	186*
Commendations	27	1,416

\*includes 2002 cases closed in 2003

**CHART A**  
**Dispositions of Allegations in Completed Investigations**  
**2002 Cases**  
**N=365 Allegations in 186 cases**



### 2003 Contacts

	December 2003	Jan-Dec 2003
Preliminary Investigation Reports	7	415
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	2	79
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	10	185
Commendations	70	861